

On February 20, 1988, Nagorno Karabakh began its national liberation movement with a resolution to secede from Azerbaijan, and on December 10, 1991, Nagorno Karabakh officially declared independence, becoming a democratic state committed to freedom and respect for human rights. But today, the people of Nagorno Karabakh are still forced to live under the constant threat of violence from Azerbaijan.

As we commemorate the somber anniversary of the beginnings of their struggle, we wish for the peaceful resolution of this conflict and the right of the Nagorno Karabakh people to determine their own future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, on February 25, 2014, I missed two recorded votes on the House floor. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall 63 and "yea" on rollcall 64.

TRIBUTE TO L. TOM BULLA

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career and contributions of Mr. L. Tom Bulla, upon the occasion of his receipt of the Shepherd Center of Greenbrier Valley's Community Service Award. Mr. Bulla's work ethic and volunteer spirit are truly deserving of this award, as he has proudly served communities, both in his professional and private life.

Tom began his career in 1962 and worked diligently to build a solid reputation as a credible leader in the North Carolina and Virginia banking communities. In 1981, he was hired as president, CEO, and director of Huntington Trust and Savings Bank in West Virginia. In 1985, Tom oversaw the successful merger of Huntington Trust with the First Huntington National Bank. Shortly thereafter, his services were requested at Charleston National Bank, where he would serve as president and CEO, and again direct the merger of two West Virginia banks; Charleston National with Bank One, in 1993. A year later, Tom accepted a position as president, CEO, and director of First National Bankshares Corporation and The First National Bank in Ronceverte, West Virginia. Tom was very active in the West Virginia Bankers' Association, serving both on its Board of Directors and as its Chairman from 1996 through 1997. Additionally, Tom was selected by his colleagues to serve on the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh's Board of Directors from 1997 until 2000.

Tom's career shepherded him into public service with an appointment from Governor JOE MANCHIN as the state's first Secretary of Commerce, where he successfully managed the consolidation of seven government agencies.

As impressive as Tom's achievements in banking and the public sector have been, his

contributions to our communities are equally impactful. Tom dedicated his time and energy to numerous nonprofit agencies including the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, Tamarack Foundation, United Way of West Virginia, Hospice, Charleston Area Medical Center, and the American Cancer Society. He served on the Lewisburg Building Commission, West Virginia Education Fund, YMCA Spirit of the Valley, and the West Virginia Economic Development Authority, along with a host of other valuable community and state organizations. And lastly, the Shepherd Center of the Greenbrier Valley, who is honoring him with its Community Service Award for Tom's fulfillment of its three tenets: lifelong learning, service to others, and spiritual growth.

Tom Bulla resides in Lewisburg, West Virginia with his wife, Nancy. Known affectionately as "Papa" or "Papa T" by his grandchildren, Tom enjoys spending time with his extended family and his lifelong love: automobiles.

Mr. Speaker, the State of West Virginia, our communities, and indeed, the United States of America owe Tom Bulla a debt of gratitude for his many years of distinguished service in his professional and personal life. I am honored to call him a friend and fellow West Virginian.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA

HON. ALBIO SIRE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. SIRE. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the 3 year anniversary of the conflict in Syria. This conflict is destabilizing the region and has created the largest humanitarian crises we have ever seen. Over 100,000 people have already been killed and 9 million people are currently in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. 3 million people are in hard to reach areas and over 250,000 people have been cut off from assistance for over a year. The UN has characterized the situation as "dramatic beyond description." There have already been multiple failed attempts at peace-talks and cease-fires. The international community and Syrian forces must come together to find a long over-due peaceful agreement and end these inhumane and debilitating acts of violence.

As we celebrate International Women's Day on March 8th, 2014, there is no better time to recognize the role of women in these protracted conflicts. They are not just the victims of violence; they are the resilient leaders working tirelessly to keep their families safe. Women leaders, who are pushing for peace can help further peace negotiations, understand a country's needs for an inclusive transition process and put Syrians on a path to reconciliation.

While we continue to search for solutions, the United States joined by the rest of the world must do all it can to have an inclusive peace process that alleviates the tremendous amount of suffering being inflicted on Syria's civilian population.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes on Tuesday, March 4, 2014.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 91 in support of passage of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 92 in support of H. Res. 488 supporting the people of Venezuela. The Venezuelan people have the right to protest peacefully without fear of violence or intimidation.

THE 25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS VETERANS BRAINTRUST

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate March 5, Boston's Crispus Attucks Day, and to celebrate the 25th Silver Anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust which took place this past September within a truly unique historical and contemporary context of Black, or African American military service and sacrifice. First, a series of national commemorations: the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, the 150th anniversary of the Civil War to Save the Union and End Slavery, the 100th anniversary of the death of Harriet Tubman, known as "The General," the 90th anniversary of the burial of Col. Charles Young, the third black graduate from West Point, the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion, the 60th anniversary of the Korean War, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers, World War II veteran and Civil Rights Hero, 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, and the 12th anniversary of 9/11; and second, amid the drum beat of war, with the U.S. threatened bombing of Syria, the senseless violence of Aaron Alexis and the Washington, DC, Navy Yard shooting rampage, and the battle of the budget, or yet another governmental shutdown on October 1st, affecting more than 800,000 employees at a cost of \$25 billion. According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, a disproportionate number of the furloughed federal workers were Black, or African American, who made up 17.7 percent of the workforce.

Chaplain Michael McCoy, Sr., provided the Veterans Braintrust forum's invocation and benediction because we know from experience that Washington forums that start with an invocation and end with a benediction are blessed occasions. Welcoming remarks were given by Representatives CHARLES RANGEL (NY-13), SANFORD BISHOP, Jr. (GA-02), EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON (TX-30) and myself. With Representative SANFORD BISHOP, Jr. speaking in his role as the Ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and as